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**CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS  
DAKOTA COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**PARKS AND RECREATION MEETING**

**March 10, 2009**

The March 2009 meeting of the Mendota Heights Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2009, in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, 1101 Victoria Curve. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

The following Commissioners were present, Chair Paul Portz, Commissioners: Tom Kraus, Maureen Brackey, Michael Toth, Liz O'Brien and Steve Commers. Commissioner Ray Morris was excused. Staff present were: Jake Sedlacek, Assistant to the City Administrator, Guy Kullander, Parks Project Manager, Teresa Gangelhoff, Recreation Programmer, and Nancy Bauer, Recording Secretary.

**MINUTES:**

Commissioner O'Brien made a motion to approve the February 10, 2009, minutes.  
Commissioner Kraus seconded the motion.

**AYES: 6**

**NAYES: 0**

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONER**

Mr. Sedlacek reported that there were nine applications submitted for the Parks and Recreation Commissioner opening. The City Council interviewed all nine candidates and Commissioner Commers impressed the Council and they thought he would be a good fit for the commission.

Commissioner Commers said he moved to Mendota Heights in 1979 and lived in Ivy Falls West for several years. He now lives in Ivy Falls East and next to Ivy Hills Park. He uses the park a lot. He is looking forward to serving on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Chair Portz welcomed Commissioner Commers.

**PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT**

Ms. Gangelhoff reported that the yellow Mendota Heights Parks and Recreation "Fun in the Summer Sun 2009" flier went out to Mendota Elementary, Somerset Elementary schools and St. Joes School. The blue "School's Out Youth Trip – Spring Break" flier advertises the spring break programs which are the Family Martial Arts Academy and the Park & Rec Day at Thompson Park Activity Center.

Chair Portz asked if the spring break programs were new.

Ms. Gangelhoff said they are new programs that are utilizing the resources in the area.

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She went on to say that residents can now register for the summer youth trips on-line with a credit card. You can also register at City Hall with cash or check. Simple steps start April 1<sup>st</sup>. Gymnastics is done as is the learn to skate program. The 55+ program is a “dog days of summer” with West St. Paul, South St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights and Thompson Park Activity Center. Mendota Heights’ night is August 19<sup>th</sup> with a senior softball game followed by a keg of root beer and a band playing music from the 40’s, 50’s and 60’s.

The Parks Celebration is June 6<sup>th</sup>. There will be a Twins game on a giant screen on June 5<sup>th</sup> at the Market Square. She still is looking for volunteers to help with the June 6<sup>th</sup> parks celebration. If anyone is interested in volunteering contact her at City Hall. The school district’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration is still being planned in conjunction with the parks celebration. The school district is going to give out free cake, have a vintage baseball game, and music will be provided by students and alumni. There is discussion of a parade and fireworks.

The ice rinks opened on December 12<sup>th</sup> and closed on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Portz asked if it was a longer or shorter season compared to last year.

Ms. Gangelhoff reported she believes it was one week shorter than last year and will have statistics for the next meeting.

Tennis is set to go with Tony Olson as the new tennis coach.

Summer Playgrounds is a new program that was discussed with Commissioners Brackey and O’Brien. Some of the programs are full. There is a pre-school program, 4-7 year olds, in the morning and 7-11 year old programs in the afternoon. Each week has a different theme with different activities.

Commissioner O’Brien asked which programs still had openings.

Mr. Sedlacek responded that Sports, Sports, Games and More has openings for the 4-7 year old group and the Nature Lovers/Fishing Week has openings for both groups.

Mr. Gangelhoff said safety camp is August 11-13, golf and tennis starts June 8<sup>th</sup>, skateboard camp is July 27-31, soccer camp is in June and the fishing derby is July 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **PARKS CELEBRATION VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Mr. Sedlacek said volunteers are needed for the Parks Celebration. Three opportunities exist to volunteer and they are a set up crew, volunteering during the event and a tear down crew. The set up crew of three would start at 9:30 setting up. During the celebration volunteers would get a free t-shirt and work during the celebration such as calling out numbers for the raffle. The tear down crew would clean up after the celebration and bring things back to city hall. Also, something to think about would be having a volunteer committee to run the 2010 parks celebration instead of Ms. Gangelhoff.

## **RECREATION PROGRAM REGISTRATION OPEN HOUSE**

Mr. Sedlacek reported that the registration open house was held at the Par 3 club house with the on-line registration program, Revtrak. The turnout was great with over 50 residents showing up. The computer system crashed before registration opened but was fixed with four stations ready to go. Revtrack is ready for residents to use now. The first day \$16,000 worth of recreation programs were signed up for. As of 5:00 tonight \$24,000 was collected. \$17,000 was taken in by cash or check and \$7,000 on-line.

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Ms. O'Brien asked if the program was working fine now.

Mr. Sedlacek reported yes and has been going well. If residents encounter a problem using the program they should call City Hall.

Commissioner Kraus asked if a person comes to City Hall to register were they being encouraged to use the on-line system.

Mr. Sedlacek responded no either way to sign up works fine.

## **DOG PARK**

Mr. Sedlacek reported that the City Council discussed the subject at their goal setting session and feel that residents can use the trails with a leash for their dogs and other dog parks in the area.

## **ROGERS LAKE**

There were a number of residents in the audience that were interested in the Rogers Lake Water Quality subject.

Chair Portz reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission can make recommendations to the City Council but can't implement anything or spend money.

Mr. Kullander reported that residents have been before the City Council to discuss weed growth in Rogers Lake. In 2005, the lake was in extreme condition with a new weed that wasn't reported in the lake before. In August, residents appeared before the City Council and Council directed City Engineer, Sue McDermott (who is no longer with the City) to work with the residents of Rogers Lake. An informational meeting was held in May and it was determined to hire a firm to monitor the quality of the water in the lake. The City paid for the study and residents contributed half. The study was completed and provided to the residents in late 2006.

The report noted that the northern half of the lake has better water quality than anticipated and the other part of the lake was not that bad. The quality of the water is not the issue but it is the weeds in the lake. Dying weeds cause an odor and decay causing muck on the bottom of the lake. Treatment options for the weeds are harvesting the weeds. This requires a one year permit and is made more expensive because the lake is shallow. It costs about \$1,000 a day to run a harvester. The average depth of Rogers Lake is four to six feet with nine foot depths in some spots.

There was a swimming beach at Rogers Lake about 30 years ago. It was treated for swimmers itch and other swimming problems this became a cost issue and the beach was closed.

City Council does not have a line item in the 2009 budget for treating weeds at Rogers Lake. The DNR recommends using chemicals to treat the weeds in the lake. Weeds were harvested last year to help with the fishing derby and the casting contest.

Mr. Hickey contacted the City again to treat the Rogers Lake weeds and it was recommended that residents attend the Parks and Recreation meeting for a recommendation to the City Council and then attend the City Council meeting.

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Commissioner Toth asked if the culvert divides the north and south side of the lake.

Mr. Kullander responds that yes it does. The consultant says Rogers Lake is about 99 acres and the DNR lists it as 116 acres. The north side is about 30-36 acres and the south side is the larger portion of the lake. There are about 35 residents that front the lake. There are six other entities such as the City, MnDOT, Xcel, St. Thomas Academy, Patterson Dental Company and Mendakota Country Club that front the lake.

Commissioner Kraus asked if the weed growth has changed historically in the lake.

Mr. Kullander responded that the types of weeds in the lake are always there. Homeowners can remove weeds from 2500 square feet in front of their property by raking them out and disposing of the weeds. They can also apply for a permit from the DNR to add chemicals by an authorized company.

Commissioner Kraus asked if storm water runoff affects the lake.

Mr. Kullander responded that the consultant was surprised the water quality wasn't worse than what it is. The water quality of the lake seems to be going up. The state fertilizer ban may have helped improve the water quality. There is some runoff into the lake.

Commissioner Kraus asked who owns the lake.

Mr. Kullander responded that the lot lines do go out into the lake and is part of the property. The DNR has regulatory control of all water bodies in the state.

Commissioner Kraus asked what request was specifically being asked for consideration.

Mr. Kullander responded to keep the lake free from weeds, mold and scum.

Commissioner Kraus asked if financial help was being asked for to help offset the cost of remediating the lake in some way. It is not known yet what the request is.

Mr. Kullander responded the residents are asking the City Council to share in the cost and find out what can and what can not be done to the lake, and the size or area to be treated.

Commissioner Kraus asked if the permit had to be applied for from the DNR before they researched what can and can not be done.

Mr. Kullander responded yes.

Mr. Patrick Hickey, 2303 Swan Drive, stated that in the past decade the City and residents surrounding Rogers Lake have worked to create an environment that would be beneficial to the health of the lake. Both property owners and the City have contributed funds in the past to have the lake examined by an outside resource and to ensure its health. St. Thomas Academy has confirmed the lake is healthy.

There are natural barriers set up by many residents along the lake to stop runoff. Rogers Lake is considered a recreational use lake by the DNR.

Kayaks and rowboats get stuck on the weeds in the lake. There is a need to address the ongoing weed, scum and mold issues. It is requested that the Parks and Recreation Commission recognize a need to address the

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weed problem in Rogers Lake on a short term and long term basis. The weeds are very thick in the lake. Rogers Lake is an asset to the community.

Chair Portz said it was a good presentation and good points were made. He agrees a continuous effort to clean up the lake is a good idea.

Commissioner Commers asked if the weeds grew faster because the lake is shallow.

Mr. Hickey believes that it could be. Can the permit be registered to the City and Rogers Lake residents to get the facts about what needs to be done to the lake to improve it? Would it not make sense to treat the whole lake at one time and not in small portions?

Chair Portz asked if there was someone at the DNR who knew the lake.

Mr. Kullander responded there is. The 2006 report was done to address weed issues and water quality of Rogers Lake.

Commissioner Kraus asked if the process with the DNR is – interested parties get the permit that is between \$20-\$30 up to a maximum of \$750. Once the permit is in place the DNR comes out and evaluates the lake and determines what action they will allow under regulatory authority to make changes to the weed growth in the lake. Until that happens the cost is unknown and what action can be done. Would this be the first step?

Mr. Kullander said it is a \$35 per property application fee and if a group of homeowners were applying it would be a maximum \$750, if it's more than 10 homeowners the price drops down to \$20. The permit application must describe what is hoped to be accomplished, in what area of the lake and by what means.

Commissioner Kraus asked why the whole lake was not being discussed.

Mr. Kullander responded it would be very expensive.

Mr. Hickey asked what very expensive meant.

Mr. Kullander responded that the 9 acre pond in Copperfield was treated with chemicals. There are about 19 homeowners and the permit was about \$20 per person and the chemical treatment cost about \$2,400 to \$2,500 a couple of years ago.

Mr. Hickey would like to see the City file a permit en mass for the good of Rogers Lake. Someone needs to get the facts on paper.

Commissioner Kraus said the sense he is getting is a permit is needed to get the facts.

Mr. Kullander responded that what the residents want accomplished is known. The area to be treated needs to be determined. Then a quote can be obtained from a reliable company. Then the City can go to the DNR for a permit for approval to chemically treat the weeds in the lake.

Commissioner Kraus said an area has to be identified to treat.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if an area to be treated in the lake has been identified.

*Approved*

Sally McNamara who lives on the east side of the lake asked why the whole lake can't be treated at the same time.

Mr. Kullander said treating 100% of the weeds in the lake would be expensive. There are nine species of weeds in the lake, as the weeds are taken out duck weed will increase in the lake. There is a need to have some weeds in the lake to support animal species and other organisms in the lake.

Ms. McNamara reported that you can't get an oar through the weeds. The reports don't seem to have enough information. There should be a better solution long term to treat the whole lake.

Chair Portz said he is getting the sense that everybody is for clean water and the costs don't seem to be that expensive.

Commissioner Kraus asked what is being recommended to the City Council.

Mr. Hickey said until the City Council directs staff - staff does not have the time or the money to do anything. Anything means getting information from the DNR. We need City Council to direct staff to get the issues on the table and come up with a plan. I would like to leave this meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission supporting the efforts of the Rogers Lake property owners.

Dick Paul, 940 Wagon Wheel Trail, has lived there for 27 years and has seen all kinds of different conditions exist within the lake. The lake is getting shallower and more crowded with weeds. What might have caused it was the lake overflow improvement to control the water level of the lake.

Commissioner Kraus asked when the improvement was made.

Mr. Kullander responded it was done in the mid 70's in response to the high water level.

Mr. Paul said decomposing weeds die in the lake and causes muck at the bottom of the lake and leaves a stench. By the culvert a lot of soil was taken out and it has become a shallow area. There were underground springs in the lake years ago and they have disappeared.

Chair Portz said there are good ideas from everyone and a motion will probably come out of the discussion.

Ira Kipp, Wagon Wheel Court, said Rogers Lake is an asset to the community. Rogers Lake Park is used by many people in the community for its various resources. There is an overflow pond and it should be checked for chemicals in the sediment because it does feed into the lake. Residents should be informed about a buffer zone on their property for the lake. The City should become more active and proactive in the protection of the lake.

Randy Johnson, Swan Court, has lived on Rogers Lake for 2 years and does sailing on the lake. By mid June the lake becomes impossible to sail because of the weeds. He did contact the DNR because of the cattails. The process was complicated but he did get rid of the cattails. The cattails seem to be growing and growing and there used to be no cattails. Left unchecked it would become a cattail swamp on the north side of the lake. There is muck on the bottom of the lake that is two to three feet deep. The recreational use for the lake is useless mid June to frost when the weeds die. He would participate in discussions with the DNR.

Anthony Pierpont doesn't live on Rogers Lake but would contribute money to get rid of the weeds.

*Approved*

Paul Maczko, Cheri Lane, has lived in Mendota Heights for 60 years and had 10 acres on Wagon Wheel Trail that he sold to the City. He has talked to the DNR who say they can't do anything for the lake. The DNR owns the water. The City should do weed control for the whole lake.

Mr. Paul said he used to burn cattails at his cabin up north in the winter. He called the DNR about burning the cattails and was told he couldn't hurt the cattails by burning them. He then called City Hall and the Fire Marshal would not allow burning in the lake.

Don Jennigis of Patterson Dental sides with the residents of Rogers Lake. Employees at Patterson Dental enjoy the lake.

Commissioner O'Brien says she remembers swimming in Rogers Lake. The whole lake should be treated and supports moving the issue forward to the City Council.

Commissioner Toth said the lake is an asset to the community and a renewable resource. The issue should be moved onto the City Council.

Commissioner Kraus made a motion to recommend to the City Council that they direct staff to explore options to control weeds in Rogers Lake.

Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion.

Commissioner Commers asked if the motion should include getting the DNR involved.

Commissioner Kraus said no – let's have staff look at the problem and make a recommendation for options – even use a private company, if necessary.

Mr. Kullander said City Council will read the Parks and Recreation minutes from tonight's meeting and will get a memo regarding Rogers Lake at the next meeting. Contacts will be made with the author of the study and the DNR will be contacted.

Commissioner Kraus asked if it would be by the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting or May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Mr. Kullander responded information could be gathered which could be presented to the City Council at their April 7<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. A cost could be obtained from a private firm to treat the weeds by that time also.

**AYES 6**

**NAYS 0**

### **PILOT KNOB RESTORATION EFFORTS**

Mr. Kullander said the memo includes information from Great River Greening regarding work that is scheduled at the Pilot Knob site over the next few months. On April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. volunteers will be brush hauling and doing general site maintenance. April 25<sup>th</sup> 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. volunteers will be site mulching key areas. June 27<sup>th</sup>, with a time to be determined, will be a sign dedication ceremony. Everyone is invited to volunteer or attend these activities.

Commissioner Kraus asked if the signs look like what is included with the memo.

*Approved*

Mr. Kullander responded they were not. There has been editing examples given to the Commission of the sign.

## **FUTURE TRAIL OPTIONS**

Mr. Kullander reported that he gave the Commission an updated trail map from 2004 with descriptions of the trail projects. Eugenia Avenue never made the list as a future trail.

## **EUGENIA AVENUE**

Commissioner O'Brien said she drove by the area to look at Eugenia Avenue and would never use it for a trail.

Mr. Kullander responded that it was a very remote area for a trail and there is a lack of funding for a trail.

Mr. Sedlacek reported that the City Council tabled the Eugenia Avenue vacation request until April 21<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if the City Council was looking for something from the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding Eugenia Avenue.

Mr. Sedlacek said the Council is considering whether the City should hold onto the property and what were the Commission's feelings on the issue?

Commissioner Toth asked what the City's liabilities were regarding the property holding onto it long term.

Mr. Sedlacek said it was overgrown and residents do take care of the property. It's the City's responsibility to take care of the property and there some old trees on the property that could be a liability.

Commissioner Commers asked how close it was to the Bruce Vento Overlook.

Mr. Sedlacek responded that it was very close to the overlook, but not a good spot to be crossing Highway 13.

Chair Portz said residents in the area do like to use the alley as a trail.

Commissioner O'Brien said she wouldn't feel good making a recommendation to the City Council because there is not enough information.

Commissioner Kraus said he didn't feel strongly one way or the other about the issue.

## **MENDOTA PLAZA**

Mr. Sedlacek reported that the City Council approved a preliminary plat development for Mendota Plaza on the SE corner of Dodd Road and Highway 110. The developer is hoping to redevelop the existing buildings and construct a free standing Walgreens. The first phase would include grading, a restaurant building and a retail building along Highway 110.

There is a plan approved by Council that preserves the existing wetland. The developer is grading out an area that could connect to a trail. There are three different trails that converge on the area. The trails originate at Friendly Hills Marsh Park and Valley Park.

Approved

City Code requires a new development to contribute a parks dedication fee. The developer is hoping the grading of the trail will reduce the amount of the park dedication fee. The amount of the parks dedication fee is being negotiated.

Commissioner Toth asked about the three blue areas on the map.

Mr. Sedlacek said they are new storm water ponds.

Commissioner Commers asked what the buildings will be.

Mr. Sedlacek said that it was a mixed use development and there will be a free standing Walgreens and a small strip mall with a restaurant with a patio, retail, office building and a four story senior housing complex. The developer is hoping to start grading in May of this year.

### PAR 3

Mr. Sedlacek handed out a landscaping plan for the Par 3 and reported that the greens met on February 19<sup>th</sup> and discussed the landscaping plan. Sage Landscape Design came up with a plan for eco type plans and shrubs. The cost for materials only is \$3,100 not including irrigation. It is not a final plan but was brought to the Commission to see if they wanted to provide funding for this project to get started on the work in the spring.

The 2009 Capital Improvement Plan for the Par 3 is:

Club house carpet	\$1,500
Club house roof	\$6,000 (if necessary)
Club house light fixtures	\$ 500
Course monument sign	\$3,000
Course misc. landscaping	\$1,000
Course tree maintenance	\$2,000
Course tee signs	\$3,000
Course hitting pads & nets	\$ 500
Maintenance building sheetrock	\$1,500
Maintenance building cage for tools	\$2,500
Equipment mower	\$11,000
	\$32,500

The Greens Committee would like to recommend to the Commission that they prioritize the installation of the landscaping project and do further capital improvements as necessary. Staff recommends that the Parks Commission discuss prioritizing the landscaping project, move ahead with it, develop the plans, ask for Council authorization to spend up to \$3,000 on materials and the appropriate staff time get it installed.

Commissioner Commers said people will notice and talk about the landscaping before the sheet rocking.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if any of the landscaping project would be visible from Dodd Road.

Mr. Sedlacek said a little bit of it would be.

*Approved*

Commissioner O'Brien said she was for the landscaping project.

Chair Portz said a new sign with a border of flowers on Dodd Road would add color to the Par 3.

Commissioner Commers asked if the project was a little over done.

Chair Portz said it was not a big area and adds color which can be seen from the parking lot. It will take a couple of years for it to fill out.

Commissioner Kraus made a motion to appropriate \$3,000 for the materials for the landscaping project at the Par 3 and authorize staff time to get it installed.

Commissioner Commers seconded the motion.

**AYES 6**

**NAYS 0**

### **COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Commissioner Kraus asked when the deadline was for the *Heights Highlites* was.

Mr. Sedlacek responded it was Thursday morning of this week, March 12<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Kraus asked about putting something in the newsletter to ask people if they would submit their email address if they were interested in being contacted about issues that come up before the Parks and Recreation Commission. We could start an email list to contact residents. It would be a nice way to quickly reach out to people in the community and ask their opinions.

Commissioner O'Brien said it sounds great. It would be a great way to ask for volunteers for next year's park celebration and things like that.

Mr. Kullander said it sounded like a good idea and if in place could have been used for the Rogers Lake issue and a good way to sample residents.

Commissioner Kraus said often decisions are made on subsets of residents of the community such as the Rogers Lake residents.

Chair Portz asked if staff would look into this.

Commissioner Kraus said it would be easy to set up, there are tools out there to set up an email database and they are cheap.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if the email addresses could be used off the registration form.

Mr. Sedlacek said he wouldn't want to do that because the email is being used just for confirmation purposes right now. Maybe a sentence could be added asking if they would be interested in being contacted by email with a parks survey or questions.

Mr. Sedlacek said he would put something in the *Heights Highlite*.

*Approved*

Commissioner Toth asked if there was any movement on the ball field fences at the Hagstrom King Park for the upcoming season.

Mr. Kullander responded that the contract will be awarded next month and be installed as soon as the ground is ready.

Commissioner Toth responded it was a nice group of people that represented themselves and the Rogers Lake concern and if anyone has concerns to bring them forward.

Chair Portz said Commissioner Commers had a good first meeting. He saw a promotion for a new sitcom "Parks and Recreation Commission", the actors are from Saturday Night Live and is looking forward to seeing it.

Commissioner Commers said thanks for the meeting and is looking forward to helping out.

Commissioner Kraus made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.